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LETTER DATED 15 JUNE 1992 FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On behalf of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, I thank the United Nations Security Council for passage of resolution 757 (1992) which resulted in the imposition of economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Subsequently, resolution 758 (1992) was adopted, addressing urgent humanitarian concerns.

Tragically, these actions by the United Nations have not yet stemmed the aggression or allowed for the delivery of desperately needed humanitarian assistance. The aggression by the Serbian regime, whose very legitimacy is being questioned by Member States of this body, continues unabated and with increasing ferocity.

As I write, Sarajevo is encircled by a ring of death. Western military intelligence sources confirm 50 to 100 pieces of heavy artillery, including 105 mm and 155 mm howitzers and 122 mm multiple-rocket launchers, along with 100 to 200 lighter mortars, firing from the hills into the city.

SA-6 and shoulder-fired SA-7 surface-to-air missiles and dozens of 20 mm and 30 mm anti-aircraft guns in the hands of the Serb extremists nearby the airport are being used daily against innocent civilians in this reign of terror. Some 80,000 federal army troops and Serb extremists are brutalizing our country.

Air attacks by Yugoslav MiG fighter jets prove the Belgrade regime's continued direct involvement, despite their statements to the contrary. Such duplicity follows their strategy of deception.

The unending slaughter by attacks, starvation and dehydration is occurring not only in Sarajevo, but in Mostar, Tuzla, Gorazde, Prijedor, Bihac, Foca, Zvornik, Bijelina and other cities.

Millions of television viewers around the world have watched with horror as these instruments of death pound our people. They feel disgust and anger at the abhorrent acts of brutality and callous disregard for human life.

Because of this "man-made hell" imposed on our people by the Belgrade regime, my Government requests the United Nations to invoke Article 42 of Chapter VII, which calls for coordinated military action by air, sea or land to restore international peace and security. Article 42 may be enacted when means provided in Article 41 prove to be inadequate. Regrettably, there is no other option.

Specifically, the Sarajevo airport must be secured, relief supply lines with escorted convoys must be opened, artillery and anti-aircraft weapons must be neutralized, military supply lines must be interdicted and the airspace over Bosnia-Herzegovina must be closed to military sorties. Through targeted air power, these objectives can be accomplished.

This is neither a civil war nor an ethnic conflict. Serbs, Croats and Muslims are fighting shoulder-to-shoulder to defend their country, just as they have been living together in peace for centuries until this senseless aggression.

Because of recent questions, it should be noted that Croatian-Bosnians are fighting within a unified force of Bosnia-Herzegovina under one command and are carrying out military tasks set by the Government of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. These courageous troops are fighting for the freedom and independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the defence forces of our country.

Since all other means have been exhausted, and since the aggression shows no signs of abating, action is demanded from this great body.

If this action is not taken now, hundreds of thousands will be condemned to death from attack and starvation, and the fundamental principles to which we have all committed will be rendered meaningless.

I would be grateful if you would have this letter circulated immediately as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. Haris SILAJDZIC
Foreign Minister